



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ARTS AWARDS RECOGNIZE STUDENTS' CREATIVITY**

**Uniontown, PA** - Each spring, as the school year comes to a close, numerous academic and athletic awards and scholarships are handed out to deserving students. For the last nine years, a partnership between the Fayette County Cultural Trust and the Connellsville Rotary Club has sought to extend that recognition to county high school students who express creativity in music, theatre and visual arts.

The annual Fayette County Achievement in the Arts Awards were presented this year to three students from each of the seven county high schools. Fayette County Cultural Trust Executive Director Daniel Cocks said the student honorees are selected by their respective teachers.

"They just pick the best in the class, basically," Cocks said. "I think it's a combination of grades and their performance."

Cocks said each winner is presented with a certificate from the cultural trust and the Rotary club, along with a \$100 stipend.

"(Sen.) Pat Stefano has been on board the whole nine years, and he has given them state certificates as well," Cocks said.

"It is paramount for our community to continue to celebrate our student's artistic talents. The value of the arts in our schools is indispensable, as artistic expression cultivates curious minds and compassionate hearts," Stefano said. "Congratulations to these honorees for showcasing their extraordinary gifts in performance and visual arts."

This year's winners are:

- Albert Gallatin – Seth Springsteen (music), Kaelyn Rozgony (theatre) and Madison Foley (visual arts);
- Brownsville Area – Brock Allen Vasbinder Jr. (music), Alysee Teeter (theatre) and Casey Moats (visual arts);
- Connellsville Area – Alexandra Huffman (music), Sophia Hamilton (theatre) and Payton Cooley (visual arts);
- Frazier – Trystan Elli Strickler (music), Maura Eckman (theatre) and Nathaniel Chamberlain (visual arts);
- Geibel – Gracie Rodriguez (music);
- Laurel Highlands – James Ainsley (music), Thomas Bradley (theatre) and Bailey Lemansky (visual arts); and
- Uniontown Area – Malcolm Patton (music), Avery Lax (theatre) and Sadie Harvey (visual arts).

Cocks said flexing their creative muscles in such pursuits helps students learn to think outside the box.

“The arts show creativity. There are a lot of different things that go into the arts. Thinking, projection – all these things that are very important, I would say, in today’s society,” he noted. “I think this is a great program for Fayette County. Westmoreland County has one, and they’ve been doing that for a long time. I thought we’d do something similar in Fayette County.”

Cocks said those who back the program also deserve recognition, including Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus, which donated the use of the Maggie Hardy Magerko Auditorium for the awards ceremony, and sponsors Armstrong, Davis & Davis, First Federal S&L Association of Greene County, House Financial Services, and Kisiel & Associates, PC.

“We’re honored to have them as our supporters, and all the people who have donated to the program as well.”

For more information, or to make a donation, visit [www.fayettetrust.org/achievement-in-the-arts](http://www.fayettetrust.org/achievement-in-the-arts).

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